

Message Text

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46

ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

L-03 EB-07 SCA-01 H-02 INR-07 DLOS-06 PRS-01 CG-00

DOT-00 SS-15 TRSE-00 COME-00 SAL-01 OES-06 ARAE-00

/060 W

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O 261800Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4045

UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 3610

FOR SCA/SCS AND ARA/CEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, HO

SUBJECT: W/W YACHT "SEA HUNTER"

REF: PLATT/BARTCH TELCON 7-26-76

1. YACHT SEA HUNTER DETAINED BY HONDURAN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES AT ROATAN, BAY ISLANDS, ON BASIS COMPLAINT FROM ADMINISTRATOR OF CUSTOMS OF PUERTO CORTES CHARGING YACHT WITH REFUSING OFFICIAL PARTY (CUSTOMS, IMMIGRATION, PORT CAPTAIN) TO BOARD. YACHT'S MASTER, CAPTAIN FRANK LAISER, INFORMED CONSOFF FRIDAY AFTERNOON OF PROBLEM, DENYING ANY ATTEMPT HAD BEEN MADE TO BOARD VESSEL WHEN THEY PUT IN AT PTO. CORTEX FOR ENGINE REPAIR. UPON LEARNING FROM REPRESENTATIVE OF LOCAL SHIPPING AGENT OF HIGH PORT CHARGES AND LACK OF REPAIR FACILITIES MASTER DECIDED CONTINUE ON TO ROATAN.

2. CONSOFF CALLED FRIDAY TO ACTING CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATOR IN PTO. CORTES TO DETERMINE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ORDER. HE STATED A COMPLAINT HAD BEEN MADE BUT NOT SURE BY WHOM AND THAT IF TRUE IT WAS SERIOUS OFFENSE INVOLVING HIGH FINE. CONSOFF EXPLAINED CAPTAIN'S SIDE OF STORY, POINTING
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OUT COMPLAINT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE BY SHIPPING AGENT

(ALSO A USC) ANGRY AT LOSING FEES. ACTING ADMINISTRATOR AGREED INVESTIGATE AND INFORM ADMINISTRATOR ON MONDAY MORNING OF FINDINGS. CONSOFF REQUESTED THAT SHOULD INVESTIGATION CLEAR YACHT NOT TO WAIT UNTIL MONDAY TO ISSUE RELEASE ORDER.

3. YACHT'S MASTER CALLED EMBASSY SATURDAY TO INFORM THAT AN ARMED GUARD HAD BEEN PLACED ON BOARD. CONSOFF EXPLAINED NOTHING MORE COULD BE DONE UNTIL AUTHORITIES AVAILABLE MONDAY MORNING.

4. YACHT'S OWNER, PULITZER, CAME TO EMBASSY THIS MORNING TO SEEK ASSISTANCE IN PRESENTING CASE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES. CONSOFF SPOKE TO CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATOR IN PTO. CORTES WHO AGREED PROBLEM APPEARED TO BE FAULT OF SHIPPING AGENT IN NOT ADVISING YACHT OF CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS, BUT THAT ORDER OF RELEASE COULD COME ONLY FROM DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CUSTOMS IN TEGUIGALPA. CONSOFF EXPLAINED PROBLEM TO DIRECTOR GENERAL FLORES BY PHONE AND SET UP APPOINTMENT FOR PULITZER WITH HIM THIS AFTERNOON. FLORES IN

MEANTIME WILL CALL PTO. CORTES AND ROATAN (IF HE CAN GET THROUGH) TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION.

5. EMBASSY HOPES FLORES WILL RELEASE YACHT WITHOUT FINE AND GIVE WRITTEN RELEASE TO PULITZER TO CARRY WITH HIM. ACCORDING TO PULITZER, YACHT AWAITING CREW REPLACEMENT TO JOIN AT ROATAN AND WOULD DEPART WEDNESDAY FOR SAN ANDRES ISLAND, COLOMBIA. EMBASSY WILL ADVISE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. BARTCH

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